

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MAPUTO 00199 180040Z
ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00 DOTE-00
EB-08 FMC-01 INR-10 NSAE-00 CG-00 DLOS-09 OES-07
LAB-04 SIL-01 PA-01 USIA-06 SP-02 /060 W
-----082745 180044Z /70

R 171200Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6704
INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY MBABANE
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN
AMCONSUL DURBAN
AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

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CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY AND CONSULATE

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ELAB, EWWT, MZ
SUBJECT: STRIKE BY DOCKWORKERS STOPPED BY POLICE

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

1. A FIVE-DAY STRIKE BY STEVEDORES AT THE MATOLA MINERAL WHARF IN MAPUTO WAS ENDED THE AFTERNOON OF FEBRUARY 11 WHEN POLICE INTERVENED, ARRESTED AND BANISHED STRIKE LEADERS AND SENT OTHER WORKERS BACK TO THE JOB. LOCAL PRESS REPORTS THAT THE STRIKE RESULTED FROM LONG-STANDING GRIEVANCES OVER SALARY AND HOURS, ON WHICH THE GOVERNMENT HAD MADE MAJOR CONCESSIONS IN RECENT MONTHS.

2. THE PRESS ATTRIBUTED THE STRIKE TO "REACTIONARY ELEMENTS," WHO "CLAIMED THAT FRELIMO DOES NOT REPRESENT THE INTERESTS OF
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THE WORKERS" AND WANTED TO SABOTAGE THE MINERAL WHARF, WHICH EARNS MOZAMBIQUE \$25,000 IN FOREIGN EXCHANGE DAILY.

3. AFTER PROTESTS BEGINNING IN SEPTEMBER, 1977, THE GOVERNMENT GAVE WORKERS AT THE MINERAL WHARF SALARY INCREASES OF 19 PER CENT (TO \$180 PER MONTH) AND CONSOLIDATED WHAT HAD BEEN A 24-HOUR, 3-SHIFT DAY TO ONE 8-HOUR SHIFT PER DAY, AND CON-

SIDERED THIS SUFFICIENT RESPONSE TO WORKER DISCONTENT.

4. PROTEST LEADERS AND OTHER WORKERS WHO REFUSED TO RETURN TO WORK FEBRUARY 11 WERE "SENT TO THEIR PLACES OF ORIGIN, WHERE, IN THE CUSTODY OF THE LOCAL PARTY ORGANIZATION, THEY WILL BE SUBJECTED TO POPULAR VIGILANCE."

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5. COMMENT: THE STRIKE, THE DRACONIAN SOLUTION AND THE PROMINENT PUBLICITY GIVEN BOTH ARE UNUSUAL OCCURRENCES IN MOZAMBIQUE, WHERE FRELIMO MAINTAINS THAT THE WORKERS CONTROL THEIR PLACES OF WORK THROUGH PARTY COMMITTEES, AND THEREFORE HAVE NO GROUNDS FOR PROTESTING GOVERNMENT OR PARTY DIRECTIVES OUTSIDE OF THE PARTY STRUCTURES.

6. MAPUTO STEVEDORES HAVE A REPUTATION FOR INDEPENDENCE AND TOUGHNESS. THEIR WAGES AND BENEFITS ARE RELATIVELY GENEROUS BY LOCAL STANDARDS, BUT THEIR IMPORTANCE TO THE ECONOMY GIVES THEM LEVERAGE OTHER WORKERS DO NOT HAVE. THE MAY, 1977, RAIL ACCIDENT AT THE SAME MINERAL WHARF IS SAID TO HAVE COST MOZAMBIQUE MORE THAN FIVE MILLION DOLLARS IN LOST HARD CURRENCY REVENUES OVER FIVE MONTHS. IN ORDER TO CONTINUE TO ATTRACT SOUTH AFRICAN AND SWAZI CARGOES, THE PORT ADMINISTRATION KNOWS IT MUST MAINTAIN EFFICIENCY AND WORKER PRODUCTIVITY AT COMPETITIVE LEVELS. THE STRIKE, WHICH CAUSED A FIVE-DAY DELAY IN THE LOADING OF ONE SHIP AT THE WHARF, OBVIOUSLY THREATENED THE GOOD REPUTATION OF THE PORT AND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE BADLY-NEEDED FOREIGN EXCHANGE IT BRINGS.

7. THE EXPULSION OF WORKERS TO THEIR "PLACES OF ORIGIN" SEEMS TO BE AN ATTEMPT TO DISPERSE THEM AROUND THE COUNTRY TO PRECLUDE FURTHER AGITATION IN MAPUTO. IT IS LIKELY THAT BANISHED DOCK WORKERS WILL BE SENT TO RURAL RE-EDUCATION CAMPS BY THE LOCAL PARTY GROUPS. THE MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS HAS PROMISED TO HELP FAMILIES OF THE BANNED WORKERS.
DE PREE

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